

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على رسولنا وحبيبنا وشفيع قلوبنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

ON THE RULING OF TAWASSUL

In its most rudimentary form, the definition of tawassul is to “seek means”. Tawassul - as referred to in this paper – is defined as supplicating to Allah through a means or an intermediary. Saying, “O Allah, by the virtue of”, “by the virtue of this pious slave of yours”, and so forth, are tawassul.

Tawassul is permissible according to the Ahl As-Sunnah, but not obligatory in any form. However, some opposing groups have contested this ruling, going so far as to claim that tawassul is shirk. In their view, both the scholars and laymen alike who affirm the orthodox position and say otherwise would be non-believers.

The aim of this paper is to prove without doubt that this view is invalid. The Quran and Sunnah are in one position regarding this matter and they are in another. With Allah’s blessing, we hope that, after reading what we put forth, they will recognize the error of this position and accept the correct one. Let us begin by analyzing the proof that can be found in the Quran itself.

The Proof About Tawassul from the Quran:

The First Proof:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا﴾ [النساء: 64]

And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by permission of Allah. And if, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O Muhammad], and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Accepting of repentance and Merciful

Ibn Kathir narrates in his tafsir of this verse, from Shaikh Abu Nasr b. Sabbagh’s book as-Shamil, the famous story of al-‘Utbî. He said, “I was sitting near the grave of the Prophet (saws) and a bedouin came and said, ‘Assalamu alaykum, O Messenger of Allah! I heard that Allah decreed: **And if, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O Muhammad], and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Accepting of repentance and Merciful**, and I came to you repenting from my sin, asking for your shafa’a towards my Lord’. And then he continued, ‘O the best and the biggest of the masters in this world, with your good smells all the lowlands and the highlands of the world have been beautified. I would sacrifice my life for your grave. There, there is generosity and honor’. After this, the bedouin left and I fell asleep, during which time I saw the Prophet (saws) in my dreams. He said, ‘O ‘Utba, go to the bedouin and give him the good tidings that he has been forgiven’”.

A similar narration was also shared by al-Qurtubi in his tafsir of this verse. If the great masters of tafsir shared these narrations to aid with the understanding of this verse, this demonstrates that these tafsirs are hujjah (proof) that tawassul is not prohibited in Islam. Furthermore, even if some have claimed that these particular narrations are weak, the fact that both Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi included them

in their exegeses means that they were accepted amongst Muslim scholars. However could it be suggested that these two great scholars would share a narration displaying shirk, without clarifying or mentioning this?

This may prompt one to wonder - doesn't Allah (swt) accept tawbah? Why would the people need to seek the Prophet (saws) as a means through which to make tawbah to him? We as imperfect individuals might not be able to make tawbah as it should be made; we may be unable to fulfill certain criteria that make our tawbah religiously valid. But if the Prophet (saws) were to make tawbah for us, Allah (swt) declares in this verse that he will forgive us.

The Second Proof:

﴿وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ [البقرة: 89]

And when there came to them a Book from Allah confirming that which was with them - although before they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved - but [then] when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it; so the curse of Allah will be upon the disbelievers

al-Qurtubi narrates in his tafsir, taken from the tafsir of Ibn Abbas, that the Jews of Khaybar were at war with the tribe of Ghatafan. On one occasion, when both armies met, the Jews lost. Afterwards, the Jews returned to the dua, "we ask you, for the sake of the unlettered Prophet that you promised to send from amongst us in the final times, to help us against them". Ibn Abbas said, "when they met Ghatafan they made this dua, and they defeated Ghatafan. And when the Prophet (saws) was sent they denied him and Allah revealed this verse".

This narration is also in the tafsirs of Tabari, Baghawi and Alusi, which originated from Ibn Abbas (ra), one of the six great mufasssirs of the companions. It is also narrated that Ibn Abbas used to say, "ask me about the mysteries of the Quran. If I were to lose the leash of my camel, I would find it in the Quran". A great mufasssir such as this one is giving this explanation; this does not come from an individual of low esteem. And as mentioned in the explanation of the previous verse, why would these great scholars narrate this hadeeth without commenting on it if it contained shirk?

One might say that the actions of those before Islam cannot be proof for us in this age. However, the point that is presented as proof here is not what these Jews did, but rather that Allah (swt), rather than criticizing the action of tawassul itself, criticized them for denying his Prophet – and what they did was not criticized by Ibn Abbas, either. This is the proof in this verse and its tafsir.

The Third Proof:

﴿وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ [البقرة: 248]

And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, a sign of his kingship is that the chest will come to you in which is assurance from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron had left, carried by the angels. Indeed, in that is a sign for you, if you are believers".

This chest was a source of assurance from Allah (swt) for Bani Isreal. They would visit it upon which it would tell them what to do, and they would take it to battle with them as it would give them assurance.

This physical object - this chest - was a means for the people of Bani Isreal. The detailed narrations of this can again be found in Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi's tafsirs. If this was the case for the people of Bani Isreal and it was accepted by Allah (swt), why would visiting the artifacts of the Prophet and seeking means though them be shirk for the followers of Muhammad (saws)? If a chest, a piece of wood, can be the cause of Allah's (swt) help towards Bani Israel, why wouldn't the sacred relics from Prophet Muhammad (saws) be so as well?

Tawheed is not refusing to accept the reasons Allah (swt) works through. Tawheed is seeing the reason of reasons (that is, Allah) in every reason. Isn't it Allah's (swt) decree that everything works through reasons in this world? Our hunger is sated through eating; thirst is sated through drinking. True tawheed is to see the blessing and generosity of Allah (swt) in every bite you eat and every sip you drink.

The Fourth Proof:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ [المائدة: 35]

O you who have believed, fear Allah and seek the means [of nearness] to Him and strive in His cause that you may succeed

In this verse Allah (swt) commands believers to seek a means of nearness to Him in a general sense, without restricting or defining the means by which we are to seek in any way. Tawassul is done through three ways: (1) through Allah's names and attributes as mentioned in Surat A'râf verse 180 (and to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them), (2) through good deeds as mentioned in Surat Baqarah verse 45 (and seek help through patience and prayer...), (3) through virtuous and pious people. How are we to interpret through this verse that only the first two types are allowed, when it has no restrictive clauses nor definitive meanings attached?

To elaborate on this with an example, in the third verse of Surat Maida, Allah (swt) says "prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine...". Here it is mentioned that blood is haram without any restrictions or definitions. But we know that not all types of blood are haram from another verse that restricts the meaning of blood in this verse. Verse 145 in Surat An'am clarifies this matter by adding the description "مسفوحا" which means "what flows". This is the way a verse that is left unrestricted can be restricted in Islamic knowledge.

With this in mind, how do we restrict the meaning of this verse without any text that indicates that we should? On the contrary, we have already shared proofs to show that such a restriction cannot be applied to this verse. If the verses about the idols were to be mentioned in this context it would not be correct to apply them to restrict the meaning of this verse either, since there are some very major differences between what the idol worshippers of the past were doing and what tawassul is. For clarification, let us mention three of them:

- 1- Allah (swt) directly mentions that he has a dislike for the idols that were being used as a means. This dislike is apparent from the verses which mention that these idols will be fuel for the fire of Jahannam. How can seeking these idols and seeking the Prophet as means be considered the same?
- 2- The people who seek the idols as means regard them as gods. But we acknowledge that the Prophets and the pious people we seek as means to Allah are merely his good and just slaves. How can these two things be the same?
- 3- The people who seek idols as means regard these idols as having real power in and of themselves. In contrast, when we seek the Prophets and the pious slaves of Allah as means,

we know that ultimately Allah is the only power in this world that can affect the creation we are a part of.

There are many more such as these not mentioned here. With these differences in mind, how can we equate seeking means through the pious slaves of Allah (swt) to seeking means with idols? Nowhere in the Quran is seeking means through the pious slaves of Allah (swt) mentioned, and thus, how can we restrict the meaning of this verse?

The Fifth Proof:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّا رُءُوسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ﴾ [المنافقون: 5]

And when it is said to them, "Come, the Messenger of Allah will ask forgiveness for you," they turn their heads aside and you see them evading while they are arrogant

In this verse Allah (swt) says, "the Messenger of Allah will ask forgiveness for you". This verse points to the position of the Prophet (saws). Although it is certainly within Allah's (swt) power to accept their istighfar directly, they are commanded to seek the Prophet (saws) as a means for their forgiveness. If the Prophet (saws) acting as a means between them and Allah (swt) meant nothing Allah (swt), he would have commanded them to make istighfar directly. If one were to understand this verse in light of the verses we shared and the ahadith we will share later, *inshaallah*, one would see that there is proof here that tawassul is allowed.

The Proof About Tawassul from the Hadiths

The First Proof:

قال رسول الله : لما اقترف آدم الخطيئة قال : يارب أسألك بحق محمد لما غفرت لي ، فقال الله : يا آدم وكيف عرفت محمداً ولم أخلقه ؟ قال : يارب لأنك لما خلقتني بيدك ونفخت في من روحك رفعت رأسي فرأيت على قوائم العرش مكتوباً لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله ، فعلمت أنك لم تضيف إلي اسمك إلا أحب الخلق إليك ، فقال الله : صدقت يا آدم ، إنه لأحب الخلق إلي ، أدعني بحقه فقد غفرت لك ، ولولا محمد ما خلقتك

The Prophet (saws) said: When Âdam made the mistake he said: "My Lord! I ask you by the virtue (right) of Muhammad to forgive me." Upon this Allah (ta'âlâ) said: "O Âdam, how did you know Muhammad when I haven't created him?" Âdam said: "My Lord! When you created me with your *yad* and blew in to me from your *rooh* I raised my head and I saw it written on the pillars of the Throne 'La Ilaha Illallah Muhammadun Rasool Allah'. Upon this I understood that you would put your name together only with the name of the most loved of your creation." Allah (te'âlâ) said: "You are correct Âdam. He is indeed the most loved of my creation to me. Make dua to me with by his virtue (right) and I will forgive you. And if not for Muhammad I would not have created you."

This hadeeth was narrated by Hakim in his *Mustadrak* as saheeh, Imam Suyuti in his book *Khasais an-Nabawiyyah* as saheeh, Imam Bayhaqi in his book *Dalail an-Nubuwwa* - which was prefaced by an introduction that said, "I will not narrate any false hadith", Qastalani and Zurqani in *al-Mawahib al-Laduniyyah* as saheeh, SheikhuIslam Balqini as saheeh, Ibn al-Jawzi in *al-Wafa*, and Ibn Kathir in *al-Bidayah wa'n Nihayah*.

This hadeeth is proof that the *ghaib* (the concealed) can be sought as means in our duas since Prophet Muhammad (saws) was not created at that time. And if we were to look at the list of notable scholars

of hadith who graded this narration as saheeh, we can see that it is not as simple a matter as merely discarding this hadeeth as a fabrication, as some are wont to do.

The Second Proof:

أن رجلاً ضرير البصر أتى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فقال: ادع الله أن يعافيني، قال: إن شئت دعوت وإن شئت صبرت فهو خير لك، قال: فادعه، قال: فأمره أن يتوضأ فيحسن وضوءه، ويدعو بهذا الدعاء: اللهم إني أسألك وأتوجه إليك بنبيك محمد نبي الرحمة، إني توجهت بك إلى ربي في حاجتي هذه لتقضى لي، اللهم فشفعه في

It was narrated that a blind man came to the Prophet (saws) and said “Make dua to Allah for him to cure me”. The Prophet said “If you wish I will make dua and if you wish you will have patience, this (you being patient) is more beneficial for you.” Upon this the man said “Make dua”. The Prophet (saws) commanded him to make wudhu and do it well and then to make this dua, “O Allah, I ask from you and turn to you with your prophet Muhammad, the prophet of mercy. I turned to my Lord with you (Muhammad) in this need of mine so that it might be solved. O Allah make him an intercessor in this.”

This hadeeth was narrated by Imam Tirmidhi as hasanun saheeh, Abu Ishaq as saheeh, Hakim as saheeh (and Dhahabi mentioned that he agrees with him), Imam Bukhari in his book *at-Tareekh al-Kabeer* as saheeh, Ibn Majah as saheeh, Imam Nasai as saheeh, Ibn Hibban as saheeh, Abu Nuaym as saheeh, Imam Bayhaqi as saheeh, and Mundhiri as saheeh.

In another variation of the hadeeth it is narrated that the Prophet said “وَ إِنْ كَانَتْ حَاجَةٌ فَأَفْعَلْ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ” (if you have any needs do this). This addition was narrated through a saheeh isnaad by Abn Abi Haytham. It is also narrated by Tabarani in his book *al-Mu’jam al-Kabeer* that the narrator of this hadeeth, Uthman b. Hunayf, used to recommend this dua to people after the Prophet’s (saws) death. Imam Tabarani then goes on to explain in length how the person who made this dua was given what he asked from Allah (swt).

The Third Proof:

الله الذي يحيي ويميت وهو حي لا يموت اغفر لأمي فاطمة بنت أسد ولقنها حجتها ووسع عليها مدخلها بحق نبيك والأنبياء الذين من قبلي فإنك أرحم الراحمين

It was narrated that when Fatima b. Asad b. Hashim passed away the Prophet (saws) called on Uthama b. Zayd, Ayyub al-Ansari, Umar, and a slave (rae) to dig her grave. The Prophet (saws) dug her grave with his hands, entered the grave when the digging was done and made this dua: “Allah, he is the one that gives life and death and he is *the hayy*¹ that doesn’t die. Forgive my mother Fatima b. Asad, teach her the answer, and widen for her where she is to enter by the virtue (right) of your Prophet and those before me. Without doubt you are the most merciful of the merciful.”

This hadeeth was narrated by Imam Tabarani in his books *al-Mu’jam al-Kabeer* and *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, Haythami in *Majmau’z Zawaad*, and Abu Nu’aym in *Hilyatu’l Anbiya*. In this hadeeth the scholars of hadeeth debated the reliability of one of the narrators: Rawh. Ibn Hibaan and al-Hakim saw him as being amongst the reliable hadith narrators. As such, according to them this hadith is saheeh. This hadeeth was also narrated by other tabi’een from other companions of the Prophet (saws). Daylami

¹ An attribute of Allah meaning that he has life. We negate all similarity and likening of Allah to creation where it is due.

and Abu Nuaym had different narrations. Al-Ghumari also mentioned that the people who saw some unreliability in Rawh saw only a small unreliability. He goes on to say that the hadeeth doesn't fall below the level of hasan, and according to Ibn Hibban, it is even saheeh.

Here we would like to clarify a matter. It is not allowed for a person to go to graves and directly ask those in them things like, "give me a child" or "give me a job", or to do things such as tying knots to the graves, slaughtering animals directly for the people inside the graves, or making sajdah for the grave. Actions such as these are grave sins that can cause one to fall in to disbelief. Tawassul in this case can manifest in two ways: (1) Asking from Allah through mentioning the virtue of his slaves and (2) asking for the dua of the deceased person. For people that don't believe in the death of the soul with the death of the body, the latter shouldn't appear troubling. Life does not end with what we call death; death is merely the door to eternal life.

The Fourth Proof:

رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم قال: إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَلَائِكَتُهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ سَبَوِي الْحَفَظَةَ يَكْتُبُونَ مَا سَقَطَ مِنْ وَرَقِ الشَّجَرِ، فَإِذَا أَصَابَ أَحَدَكُمْ عَرْجَةٌ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَاةٍ فَلْيُنَادِ: أَعِينُوا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ

It was narrated that the Prophet (saws) said: **"Without doubt there are angels of Allah on earth besides the hafadha. They write down the leaves that fall from trees. If anyone amongst you is affected by a mishap in a desert, he should call out: 'O slaves of Allah, help me!'"**.

This hadeeth with similar meanings was narrated through many chains of isnad. The hadeeth was narrated by Imam Tabarani in *al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer*, by Bazzar in his *Musnad*, by Bayhaqi in his book *Shu'ab al-Iman*, and by Ibn Shaybah in his *Musannaf*. And this hadeeth has a shahid (a different narration that strengthens another narration) from Ibn Mas'ood that was narrated by Imam Tabarani, Abu Ya'la in his *Musnad*, Ibn as-Sunni in *'Amalu'l-Yawmi wa'l-Laylati*, and by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in *al-Matalib al-'Aliya*. It was mentioned by Imam Nawawi in his book *al-Adhkaar*. Ibn 'Allân in his commentary on the book of Imam Nawawi mentioned that this hadeeth would have a grading of hasan, quoting Ibn Hajar. It is hasan because of its many chains strengthening each other.

Imam Nawawi mentioned in his book *al-Adhkar* that his teachers made this dua on some occasions and that it worked. He also mentioned that he himself did the same. And it is narrated from Abdullah b. Ahmad b. Hanbal from his father Ahmad b. Hanbal that his father made this dua when he got lost during his travels (مسائل الإمام أحمد برواية ابنه عبد الله).

If tawassul was shirk, wouldn't these scholars have left Islam? One possible rebuke to this hadith proving tawassul may come from the fact that the apparent meaning of the narration is about asking the angels for help. However, we must remember that whether it be angels or the pious slaves of Allah (swt), there is no difference; we believe that even when asking the angels, they don't have the power to help us without the help of Allah (swt). Extending the same logic used to claim that seeking the pious slaves of Allah (swt) as means is shirk, this should also be shirk - but we know that there is no action that doesn't come from Allah (swt), directly or indirectly. Furthermore, the scholar Muhammad b. 'Allân said in his commentary on this hadeeth that the slaves of Allah (swt) mentioned here are either the angels, or jinn, or the pious slaves of Allah (swt).

The Fifth Proof:

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: من قال حين يخرج إلى الصلاة: "اللهم إني أسألك بحق السائلين عليك، وبحق ممشائي، فإني لم أخرج أشراً ولا بطراً ولا رياء ولا سمعة، خرجت اتقاء سخطك وابتغاء مرضاتك، أسألك أن تنقذني من النار، وأن تغفر لي ذنوبي، إنه لا يغفر الذنوب إلا أنت" وكل الله به سبعين ألف ملك يستغفرون له، وأقبل الله عليه بوجهه حتى يفرغ من صلاته

It was narrated from the Prophet (saws) that he said: "Whoever says when he is leaving for prayer from his house 'O Allah, I ask you by the virtue (rights) of those who ask from you and by the virtue of my walking because I didn't leave this house for false pride, arrogance, showing off or for a reputation. I left it for refuge from your anger and seeking your approval. I ask for you to protect me from the Fire and forgive my sins. Without doubt only you can forgive sins', Allah will assign for him seventy thousand angels making istighfar for him and Allah will turn to him with his ihsan until his prayer is completed".

This hadeeth from Abu Said al-Khudri (ra) was narrated by Ibn Majah in *Masajid*, Ahmad b. Hanbal in *al-Musnad*, Ibn Khuzaymah in *at-Tawhid*, Ibn as-Sunni in *Amalu'l Yawm wa'l Laylah*, Imam Baghawi in his *Musnad*, Imam Bayhaqi in *ad-Da'awatul Kabeer*. This hadeeth was accepted as being hasan by a group of scholars.

In this hadeeth, the word used when seeking means is "بِحَقِّي" which would literally translate to "by the rights of the...". But it goes without saying that none of his creation can have any rights on Allah (swt), while Allah (swt) can have rights on his creation. The meaning that is meant to be conveyed by the usage of this word is, "by the virtue/position of". In this dua there are two types of tawassul - one is seeking the steps one takes when going to prayer as means, and the other is seeking the pious slaves of Allah (swt) that make dua to him as means. The first one is an example of tawassul via deeds, and the second is an example of tawassul via the pious slaves of Allah (swt). Here the Prophet (saws) advises us to do tawassul. How can tawassul be considered haram, or even shirk, if the Prophet recommended it?

The Proof About Tawassul from the Practices of the Companions:

The First Proof:

جاء في صحيح البخاري: ان عمر بن الخطاب اذا قحطوا استسقى بالعباس بن عبدالمطلب فقال: اللهم انا كنا نتوسل اليك بنبينا فتسقينا، وانا نتوسل اليك بعم نبينا فاسقنا، قال فيسقون

It was narrated in *Saheeh al-Bukhari* that Umar al-Khattab used to ask Abbas b. Abdilmuttalib to make dua for rain when there was drought. He used to say, "O Allah, we used to seek our Prophet as means and you would give us rain and now we seek the uncle of our Prophet as means, give us rain!" (The narrator of the hadeeth) said: "It rained for them."

In this hadeeth Umar (ra) was seeking the uncle of the Prophet as means. If this hadeeth is so clear how can people continue to deny tawassul? According to these people, there is a hidden "by the dua of" in the sentence, "O Allah, we used to seek our Prophet as means and you would give us rain and now we seek the uncle of our Prophet as means, give us rain!". However, there is proof that such a word being added here is inappropriate.

(1) Ibn Hajar said: Zubayr b. Bekkar narrated in his book *al-Ansab* that after the events described in this hadeeth, Abbas (ra) made his dua with these words: "O Allah, every trouble finds us because of a sin from us and it is removed by tawbah from us. This group sought me as means for my relationship with the Prophet...". From here we understand that the reason they were seeking Abbas (ra) as means was to seek the virtue of the Prophet through him.

(2) Imam Kawthari says: “Adding the word ‘dua’ to the text is speaking without backing and proof. The tawassul through the uncle (ra) of the Prophet (saws) was tawassul done through the relationship between Abbas (ra) and the Prophet (saws).

(3) Imam Shawqani said: “There was ijma’ amongst the sahaba that tawassul through others was allowed. This is understood from the fact that no companion spoke against the tawassul done through Abbas (ra).”

(4) It was also narrated that Umar (ra) said, “seek Abbas as means for this drought”. Ibn Hajar and Ibn Rushayd said that “seek Abbas as means...” cannot mean “ask for his dua”, because Umar (ra) said this after he had asked Abbas (ra) to make dua. After having already made dua, Umar (ra) would not command people to make dua again.

Imam Kawthari also derived the ruling that doing tawassul through someone with a lower rank, although it is possible to do it through someone with a higher rank, is allowed.

The Second Proof:

أصاب الناس قحط في زمن عمر بن الخطاب، فجاء رجل إلى قبر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم. فقال: يا رسول الله استسق الله لأمتك فإنهم قد هلكوا. فأتاه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في المنام فقال: إيت عمر، فأقرئه مني السلام، وأخبرهم أنه مسقون، وقل له عليك بالكيس الكيس. فأتى الرجل فأخبر عمر، فقال: يا رب ما ءالوا إلا ما عجزت عنه

It was narrated that the people were struck by a drought in the time of Umar al-Khattab. Upon this a man came to the grave of the Prophet (saws) and said: “O Messenger of Allah, ask for rain from Allah for your nation, for they have been ruined.” The Prophet (saws) came to him in his dream and said: “Go to Umar and say my salams to him, and give him the news that they will receive rain. And tell him ‘Your duty is to be good in your dealings’.” Upon this the man came and gave the news to Umar. And he (Umar) said: “O Allah, except for things that exceed me I don’t refrain from spending effort.”

This narration was narrated by Imam Bukhari, Imam Bayhaqi, Imam Subki, Ibn Abu Haytham, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Ibn Asakir, Ibn Hajar, and Ibn Kathir. All of these imams in hadeeth agreed that this hadeeth is saheeh. Ibn Hajar narrated that the person who made the dua was Bilal b. Harith.

Something to take note of here is how Umar (ra) dealt with the man who brought him this news. If tawassul was not allowed in Islam, or if it was shirk, it cannot be conceivable that Umar (ra) would remain silent while the man who had made the tawassul explained to him what had occurred through the course of the events. Can we claim that Umar (ra) did not know that it was shirk, or that he was a partner in shirk? Were the narrators of this hadeeth also guilty of being in the same position? Even Ibn Taymiyyah narrates this hadeeth in his book *Iqtidha’u’s Siraat al-Mustaqeem*, in which he grades it as saheeh. He also mentions such occurrences are not uncommon, but he claims that this hadeeth does not show that tawassul is permitted.

The Third Proof:

حدثنا أبو النعمان حدثنا سعيد بن زيد حدثنا عمرو بن مالك النكري حدثنا أبو الجوزاء أوس بن عبد الله قال قحط أهل المدينة قحطاً شديداً فشكوا إلى عائشة فقالت انظروا قبر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فاجعلوا منه كوى إلى السماء حتى لا يكون بينه وبين السماء سقف قال ففعلوا فمطرنا مطراً حتى نبت العشب وسمنت الإبل حتى تفتقت من الشحم فسمي عام الفتح

It was narrated from Abu Nu'man -> Sa'id b. Zayd -> Amr b. Malik an-Nakrî -> Abu'l Jawzaa' Aws b. Abdillah in the *Sunan* of Imam Darimi that a severe drought had happened in Madina and the people complained about this to Aisha (ra). Upon this she said: "Visit the Prophet's (saws) grave and make an opening in its ceiling so that there is nothing between the grave and the sky." He said (the narrator) "We did it and such a rain fell that the foliage grew and the camels batted until they were swelled with fat. That year was named the year of swelling.

This narration was narrated in the *Sunan* of Imam Darimi, Ibnu'l Jawzi, Imam Suyuti, Ibn Kathir, as well as some other hadith scholars. Sa'id b. Zayd, one of the narrators for this hadeeth, was seen as reliable by Ibn Hajar. Imam Bukhari, Imam 'Ijli, Abu Ja'far ad-Darimi, Ahmad b. Hanbal, Abu Zura, Ibn Sa'd, and Ibn Ma'in also saw Sa'id b. Zayd as a reliable narrator. All of the imams of Kutub Sitta except for Imam Nasai narrated from him. The other narrator in the hadeeth - Abu'l Jawza - is also from the reliable narrators of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim. Abu Nu'man is from the teachers of Imam Bukhari. Imam Daraqutni said about him: "Imam Bukhari narrated more than 100 hadith from him. Ahmad b. Hanbal and Abd. Humayd also narrated from him. The people in this chain are all reliable narrators.

If we were to ponder on this hadith, how can we in turn claim that tawassul is kufr? Didn't Aisha (ra) know how to distinguish between belief and disbelief? If she didn't know, didn't the other companions in her time, who would have had to witness this event, know that it was disbelief? After all, they were among those who would be most capable of distinguishing between the two. If they didn't prohibit such a thing from being done and didn't explicitly condemn it as kufr, how can anyone else from later generations say such a thing? As such, following the companions requires one to deny the belief that tawassul is disbelief.

The Fourth Proof:

عن عثمان بن حنيف: أن رجلاً كان يختلف إلى عثمان بن عفان رضي الله عنه في حاجة له فكان عثمان لا يلتفت إليه ولا ينظر في حاجته فلقى عثمان بن حنيف فشكا ذلك إليه فقال له عثمان بن حنيف أنت الميضاة فتوضأ ثم أتت المسجد فصلى فيه ركعتين ثم قل اللهم إني أسألك وأتوجه إليك بنبينا محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم نبي الرحمة يا محمد إني أتوجه بك إلى ربك ربي جل وعز فيقضي لي حاجتي وتذكر حاجتك وروح إلي حتى أروح معك فانطلق الرجل فصنع ما قال له عثمان ثم أتى باب عثمان فجاء البواب حتى أخذ بيده فأدخله عثمان بن عفان فأجلسه معه على الطنفسة وقال حاجتك فذكر حاجته فقضاها له ثم قال له ما ذكرت حاجتك حتى كانت هذه الساعة وقال ما كانت لك من حاجة فأتنا ثم إن الرجل خرج من عنده فلقى عثمان بن حنيف فقال له جزاك الله خيراً ما كان ينظر في حاجتي ولا يلتفت إلي حتى كلمته في فقال عثمان بن حنيف والله ما كلمته ولكن شهدت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأتاه ضريراً فشكا عليه ذهاب بصره فقال له النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم أفتصبر فقال يا رسول الله إنه ليس لي قائد وقد شق علي فقال له النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنت الميضاة فتوضأ ثم صل ركعتين ثم ادع بهذه الدعوات قال عثمان فوالله ما تفرقنا وطال بنا الحديث حتى دخل علينا الرجل كأنه لم يكن به ضرر قط

It was narrated from Uthman b. Hanif (ra) that there was a man who would go to Uthman (ra) for a need of his and Uthman (ra) wouldn't pay attention to him or see to his need. This man met Uthman b. Hunayf (ra) and complained about this to him. Upon this Uthman b. Hunayf said: "Go to the wudhu place, make wudhu and then go to the masjid, pray two rakahs and after this say "O Allah, I ask from you and turn towards you with our Prophet Muhammad (saws), the Prophet of mercy. O Muhammad, I turn towards your Lord with you, the Lord of greatness and glory so that he might solve my need for me. And then mention your need and come with me so that we go. After this the man left and did what Uthman (ra) told him to do. The door keeper came and held his hand and took him inside and sat him on a rug and said "Your need?". So he told his need and he solved it and said "Why didn't you tell of your need until this hour? Whatever you have in terms of needs come to us with it." After this the man left him and met Uthman b. Hunayf (ra) and said to him "JazakAllahu khayran. He wouldn't see to my need nor pay attention to me until you talked about me to him."

Upon this Uthman b. Hunay (ra) said: “I swear by Allah I didn’t talk about you to him but I saw the Prophet when a blind man came to him and complained to him about his eyesight being lost. Upon this the Prophet (saws) said: “Will you have patience?” He said: “O Prophet there is no one to show me the way and this situation has been very hard for me.” Upon this the Prophet (saws) said to him: “Go to the wudhu place, make wudhu and then go to the masjid, pray two rakahs and then make these duas.” Uthman said: “I swear on Allah, we didn’t leave and our conversation took a long time until the man entered where we were and he was as if he was never ever blind.”

This hadeeth was narrated by Imam Tabarani in *al-Mu’jam as-Sagheer* as saheeh, Rawh Ibn’ul Qasim, Shabib Ibnu Sa’id al-Makki (a reliable narrator in hadeeth), Shu’bah, Abu Ja’far al-Khatmi (also reliable), Hakim, al-Haythami, Imam Bayhaqi in his book *Dalail’un Nubuwwa*, and Imam Tabarani in *al-Kabeer* as saheeh.

It is once again apparent from the actions of the companions that tawassul is not shirk. How can something the companions did not fear doing be shirk? Surely they knew how to differentiate between what is shirk and what is not better than the generations who preceded them. Even if we were to accept that such a narration *might* be weak, how did the great scholars narrate it as saheeh? Tawassul being an action of disbelief or not is a matter of aqeedah; if a hadith were to contradict one of the tenets of aqeedah in Islam and contain shirk, these same scholars would be swift to comment on it. And yet we see that they did not find any hesitation in grading these hadith as saheeh or dhaif. This shows that there is no apparent contradiction between this hadith and the beliefs of Islam.

The Fifth Proof:

ونادى بشعارهم يومئذٍ، وكان شِعَارُهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ: (يَا مُحَمَّدَاهُ)

It was narrated that in the battle of Yamamah the sign of the Muslim army was “Ya Muhammadâh” as narrated Ibn Kathir.

If we were to analyze the meaning of “Ya Muhammadâh”, we would see that “ya” is a particle with a meaning of crying out. And the *alif* in “Muhammadâh” is called *alif’ul istighatha*. The meaning of these words is, “O Muhammad, help us.”.

It is claimed that the companions were using this word as a secret password of sorts, and that there is no meaning of tawassul contained within it. But if the meaning of said word is shirk, why would the companions use it as a password between them? This saying was used by an entire army consisting of both the companions and the tabi’en - how can it be imagined that all of the companions and tabi’en in the army would agree on a word with shirk in it for a password?

The Proof of Tawassul from the Sayings of the Scholars:

Up until this point we have presented proof from the Quran, ahadith, and the actions of the Sahabah. Now we will endeavor to present the proof from the sayings of the scholars. As this is a matter of religion, who would be better poised to answer this question than its scholars? In the case of medical affairs, a mediocre doctor is better equipped than a great engineer. And thus, the views of those who devoted their lives to studying Islam are worth noting in this paper.

The founder of the Hanafi madhab, Imam’ul A’dham Abu Hanifa, regarded tawassul as being allowed. We will examine his views with greater detail later on in this paper.

Imam Shafi'i also regarded tawassul as being allowed, as understood from what is documented in his books and what is narrated from him. He says, in his book *ad-Diwan*, "the Ahl'ul Bayt (the family of the Prophet) are my means and a way towards the Prophet. Through their means I hope that my book will be given through my right hand". He also says, "When I have a need, I pray two rakats and go to Imam Abu Hanifa's grave to make dua there. With his barakah, my needs would be solved". (al-Haythami, *al-Khayrut'ul Hisan*)

One of Imam Shafi'i's students relays: "One day Imam Shafi'i told me to deliver a letter to Ahmad b. Hanbal. I took the letter and delivered it to him. Ahmad b. Hanbal, upon reading the letter, was overjoyed. He gifted the shirt that he was wearing. I brought his reply to the letter to Imam Shafi'i. Imam Shafi'i said to me, 'I wouldn't want to take the shirt that was gifted to you, but you should at least dip that shirt in water and give us that water so that we might join in on the barakah of the shirt'". (Ibn'ul Jawzi, *Manaqibu Imam Hanbal*).

Let us now relay the views of Imam Malik regarding Tawassul. It was narrated by Qadhi Iyadh and other scholars that the Abbasid khalifa Abu Ja'far, while visiting the grave of the Prophet, asked Imam Malik where he should turn his face. Imam Malik instructed him to turn his face towards the Prophet, citing the hadeeth of Adam (as) that we mentioned earlier on in this paper.

Ahmad b. Hanbal said, "for the person that is making dua for lack of rain, it is mustahab to do tawassul with the Prophet" (Imam Mirdawi, *al-Insad Ma'rifati'r Rajih Min'al Khilaf*). His son Abdullah b. Ahmad also said that his father would seek tawassul with the hair of the Prophet - kissing it, washing it in water, and then drinking the water for cure (ad-Dhahabi, *Siyar'ul A'lam an-Nubala*). Abu Bakr al-Marwazi in his book *Mansak* also said that Ahmad b. Hanbal would do tawassul with the Prophet, each time saying, "O Allah, I return to you with your Prophet, your Prophet of mercy Muhammad (saws)".

Ibn Taymiyyah was the foremost scholar who denied the permissibility of tawassul. Imam Subki, a scholar he speaks rather highly of, wrote a book entitled *Shia'us Siqam fi Ziyaratil Khayri'l Anam*, in which he explains the views of the four madhabs regarding this matter and openly states that he regards tawassul as being permissible. He says, "know that doing tawassul and istighatha with the Prophet, seeking him as a means towards Allah, is both allowed and liked. It being allowed is one of the things that is known by every religious person. No one amongst any of the religions has denied this. Denying it began with Ibn Taymiyyah".

Ibn Hajar al-Haythami says in his book, *Jawhar al-Munazzam fi Ziyarat'il Qabri'l Mukarram*, that before Ibn Taymiyyah no one denied the permissibility of tawassul and istighatha through the Prophet. In the same book he discusses this matter and shows that it is allowed.

Ibn Abidin says in *Raddi'l Mukhtar*, "I, through Tawassul with the Prophet, every holder of great rank from the obedient, and with our imam Imam al-A'dham, ask Allah through his grace and bounty to make this job easy for me, to give me the correct inspirations and to forgive my shortcomings and my mistakes.

It was even said by Muhammad Abdul Wahhab in *Majmuatu'l Muallafat* that he does not deny the validity of making dua to Allah and seeking the prophet or his pious slaves as means. He goes on to show that there is no takfir in matters of ijtihad such as tawassul.

Imam Qudamah, in his book *al-Mughni*, discusses the manners of visiting the grave of the Prophet (saws): "After visiting the grave, it is said - 'I came to you making tawbah from my sins and made you a means and intercessor between me and Allah'".

Another well respected scholar - Abu'l Faraj al-Jawzi - said in his book *Sayd'ul Khatir* that he could not discipline his nafs, so he went to the graves of some pious slaves of Allah and made dua seeking them as means so that he may be cured.

Imam Shawkani says in his book *ad-Durr'un Nadiyyah* that making tawassul through the slaves of Allah, who have knowledge and honor, is actually making tawassul through their honor and good deeds. In fact, a person becomes honorable through doing honorable acts.

Ibn'ul Qayyim in his book *Kitab'ur Ruh*, when explaining the hadeeth, "now his eyes see with Allah and his ears hear with Allah" says:

"Allah the magnificent has shown that his love towards the person who nears him will benefit him. When Allah loves a slave, he will get closer to his ears, eyes, hands, and feet. After this, his eyes will see with Allah, his ears will hear with Allah, he will hold with him and walk with him. His heart will be like the mirror that reflects the reality of the existence of things. He will make very few mistakes in his insights. Because when the slave looks at existence with Allah he will see it as it is, and when he hears with Allah he will hear it as it is.

So, a complete wali can, after the permission of Allah, whatever the distance, even if he be in the farthest corners of the earth, hear him. He can, with Allah's permission and will, see a man in the farthest corners of the earth. He can if Allah gives him the power and permission hear the voice of the far away person and help him too. This is possible and easy for the slaves of Allah when he wishes it".

In the same book, Ibn'ul Qayyim also mentions that the dead can help the living and perform certain actions. The scholars who say this are the imams of the groups that deny tawassul. By denying tawassul these groups are also denying their imams.

After all that has been said, a person is faced with two choices: either accept that tawassul is not shirk, or maintain that it is.

If one chooses to insist on the latter, one will have to accept that the imams of the companions, the imams of the four madhabs, and all the scholars we mentioned who saw tawassul as permissible (as well as all those who came before Taymiyyah) were in shirk.

If one chooses to accept that tawassul is not shirk, one will have found the way that all of the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah were upon, and relieved oneself from the burden of having unjustly declared so many innocent believers to be nonbelievers.

Let us now move on to some questions and answers.

Questions and Answers

Question One:

The people who said that tawassul is not permissible claimed that Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Alusi were on this view as well. They say that these two scholars regarding tawassul as impermissible is proof enough that it is.

Let us first examine whether or not Imam A'dham Abu Hanifa said something like this. It is true that he wrote, "it is makrooh (disliked) for the person making dua to say, 'I ask you **by the right** of the Prophet and messengers', or, 'I ask you for the right of the Bayt'ul Haram or Masha'ir'ul Haram'".

Here we can see that Imam A'dham regarded using the phrase, "by the right of", as disliked. The reason for this is that during Imam A'dham's times, there were some individuals inclined towards the Mu'tazili school who were claiming that it is obligatory upon Allah to give blessings to a slave who performed some good actions. Imam Abu Hanifa knew that there are no such obligations on Allah; everything he does is because of his wisdom and mercy, not because of any obligation upon him. Since saying "by the right of" implies that there are some rights of the slaves over Allah, as believed by the Mu'tazilis, Imam A'dham ruled that the usage of this phrase is makrooh in order to combat these views. This can be compared to how he saw it as disliked to say, "I am a believer inshaallah", as, in the atmosphere Imam A'dham lived in where khariji ideologies were manifesting, this opened the door to bigger tribulations.

So according to Imam A'dham it is allowed to make dua to Allah (swt) through the virtues or position of the person. If, when saying "by the right of", someone means to say, "by the virtue of", then this is also allowed. This is further cemented through how the narration from him is phrased. He says, "it is makrooh to say, 'O Allah, give me this by the right of this person', as there is no right of anyone over Allah". If Imam A'dham was on the view that tawassul is inherently shirk, why would he say that this phrasing is makrooh? Had he regarded it as shirk, would he have explained it in such a way? Why didn't he use any of the explanations that are commonly referred to by those who claim tawassul is shirk?

This explanation is given by one of the great Hanafi scholars Aliyy'ul Qari in his book, entitled *Fathu Bab'il Inayah*: "Imam A'dham labeling the phrase of 'by the right of' as makrooh is when a meaning of obligations and force is given to the word 'right'. Because no one has any right over Allah in terms of obligation and forcing him. If the intention is to mean virtue through the use of the word right, then this is allowed".

Ibn Abidin also gave the same explanation for Imam A'dham's position on this matter. The Hanafi madhab should be understood through the explanations of the scholars following that madhab, not through explanations given by those who claim to have no madhabs.

As for Imam Alusi seeing tawassul as prohibited - Imam Alusi says in his book entitled *Ruh'ul Meani* that it is allowed for a person to make tawassul through the personage of the Prophet (saws) and through his position. Again, in the same book he states that tawassul through someone regarded as having a high status is also allowed. According to him, saying, "for the sake of your beloved slaves" is allowed, but it is not allowed to say, "for the sake of your beloved slave Mehmed", since, in reality, there is no way of knowing if Mehmed was truly a beloved slave of Allah (swt). Such forms of tawassul are taking risks in assuming who is beloved to Allah (swt), and according to Imam Alusi they are to be abstained from.

Imam Alusi says in the same book, "Allah (swt) sometimes gives karamat to people he wishes to after their death, as he gives them before their death. Allah (swt) cures the sick, saves the person about to drown, helps against the enemy, makes it rain and gives these as karamat to that slave".

Therefore, neither Imam A'dham Abu Hanifa nor Imam Alusi saw tawassul as being impermissible. If we were to quote al-Haythami and Imam Subki, such views did not manifest until Ibn Taymiyyah.

Question Two:

The phrase which the people who deny tawassul never drop from their tongues is, "no one except Allah can be asked for help". They back this up by mentioning the verses from the Quran – most notably from Surat Fatiha ("We only ask you for help") and Surat Al-Imran ("help is only from Allah").

They may also quote the hadith, “if you ask, ask of Allah; if you seek help, seek help of Allah”. According to them, tawassul is asking others besides Allah for help.

In our response, we would in turn like to ask these people some questions. Our first question is this:

When you go to the doctor, are you not asking for his help? Do you not call him - the doctor - directly for help? Did you fall to shirk because you asked someone other than Allah (swt)? If you went to the doctor and asked him to help you, and he replied by saying, “help is only sought from Allah. By asking me to help you, you are committing shirk. Ask Allah for help, not me”, what would your reaction be? If a doctor were to prescribe some medicine for you, would you say, “expecting cure from the medicine is expecting help from others beside Allah and this is shirk. I refuse to use this medicine”?

These examples can be continued ad infinitum; in such a case, there would be no one left on earth that has not fallen to shirk. The important thing to internalize here is that there is no action that is not from Allah (swt) - that is not created by his power. Even when a doctor cures you, this is only through Allah’s (swt) power. When the medicine cures you, this is only through Allah’s (swt) power. If someone did not understand this, and claimed that the medicine itself has the power to cure him without Allah (swt) having any say in the matter, then he would have fallen to shirk.

Seeing the means through which Allah (swt) works, and acting within the boundaries of these means, is not shirk. Allah (swt) decreed that the heavens and earth work through an intricate system of cause and effect held upright only through his power. When an individual works within the boundaries of this system; when he asks the doctor for help and uses medicine to cure his ailments, this is not denying Allah’s power. This is accepting that Allah (swt) will help and cure him through his material usage of the medicine the doctor’s assistance.

True tawheed is to be in constant remembrance of the fact that, if not for Allah (swt), nothing would be able to save you. If Allah (swt) did not wish for it to be so, then all of the best doctors in the world combined would not be able to save you. Those who claim that tawassul is shirk seem to be missing this point. When someone makes dua to Allah (swt) through means, he is merely acting within the boundaries that Allah (swt) decreed; he is aware of true tawheed. How can such a person be accused of having fallen to shirk?

Every act of seeking help through worldly means is in fact a dua made to Allah (swt). Every medicine used, every doctor visited, is a dua to Allah (swt) to be cured. In these duas, the visit to the doctor or the usage of medicine are the means for our duas to be accepted.

Here it must also be understood that there are those who do not follow the guidelines set by the Quran and Sunnah when doing tawassul or istighatha, and consequently fall in to danger. If one does not have the correct understanding of true tawheed mentioned above, then tawassul will be a door to sins. However, this is also true for anyone who goes to the doctor without the realization of this fact. When performing tawassul or istighatha, one must know that these are only a means towards Allah (swt), that may bring us closer to him in order for our duas to be accepted. If one believes that the person being used as a means has any inherent power that is self-reliant and independent from Allah, then this will be a door to shirk and one should repent from the grave error one has made.

This is akin to a person who sees the sun from a mirror in his room. If we were to ask him if the mirror has any light or heat of its own, he would say no. But if we then asked him to break the mirror, he would again respond in the negative, as the mirror is a means to obtain light and heat. Such a person is like those who perform tawassul. The things he needs to remind himself of are, (1) knowing that

heat and light are from the sun, (2) protecting the mirror, and (3) never giving the attributes of the sun to the mirror itself.

To summarize - the hadith regarding only asking for help from Allah does not mean that asking for help from his creation is prohibited. Rather, its meaning is that one should understand that receiving help or not is all dependent on Allah (swt).

Question Three:

The groups who deny tawassul share verses from the Quran about the mushrik people worshipping the idols, and claim that a person that is doing tawassul is like these mushrik people. One such example is Surat Zumar verse number three:

﴿أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ﴾ [الزمر: 3]

Unquestionably, for Allah is the pure religion. And those who take protectors besides Him [say], "We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position." Indeed, Allah will judge between them concerning that over which they differ. Indeed, Allah does not guide he who is a liar and [confirmed] disbeliever

According to the groups who say tawassul is not allowed, the idol worshippers were worshipping these idols so that they may become closer to Allah, and the people doing tawassul are the same - therefore the person doing tawassul is a mushrik.

There are many other verses these groups share that will not be listed here, as the general picture can be understood from the example given. All the verses they bring are about the mushrik people worshipping their idols. According to them, the actions of performing tawassul and worshipping an idol are the same. In this section, we will show that there is no connection between idol worshipping and performing tawassul. Here are some of the differences between them:

1. The idols are Allah's enemies. Because of this, Allah (swt) has mentioned that he will throw them into hellfire to be used as fuel. However, the pious slaves of Allah (swt) are his awliya (friends).
2. Idol worshippers view their idols as being deities, while the person performing tawassul knows that the person (or their position) he is using as a means is merely pious slave of Allah (swt).
3. Idol worshippers believe that their idols have some inherent powers, such as giving, taking, creating, taking lives, giving them, etcetera. A person who performs tawassul knows that only Allah (swt) has power over his creation. Allah (swt) is the one who gives, takes, creates and destroys. The person that is mentioned is only a means towards Allah (swt).
4. Idol worshippers will perform acts of worship to their idols, such as making sajdah. A person performing tawassul will not do any such act. How could the worship of an idol be equivalent to this?
5. The idol worshipper will ask from the idol, while the person performing tawassul only asks from Allah. Even if he used a phrase aimed at the person he is seeking as means, he will know that such a person is only a means towards Allah (swt).
6. Idol worshippers do not remember Allah; their deities and objects of their love are their idols. A person performing tawassul will remember Allah, knowing that He is his lord and that his love is to him.
7. An idol worshipper will believe that the idol he is worshipping has absolute power to hear, see, and know. A person performing tawassul understands that the person he is using as a means

is, in reality, powerless, and only through a blessing of Allah will he see or hear or know, as mentioned by Ibn Qudamah.

8. The idol worshipper will believe that the idol itself will come to his help. The person performing tawassul will know that help will only come from Allah (swt), without means or with means, as explained in the answer for the previous question.
9. An idol worshipper will see the idol he is worshipping as a partner to Allah, while a person performing tawassul will only see the person he is performing tawassul through as a pious slave of Allah (swt).
10. An idol worshipper will see the idol he is worshipping through an external lens; he will only see the physicality of the idol and believe that things come from it directly, or that it contains meaning in itself. A person performing tawassul will see things through an internal lens; he will know that everything in the physical realm is a sign pointing to the existence and power of Allah (swt), and that everything makes sense because of its relation to Allah.

We have now listed ten differences, all of which did not require great introspection to see. If deep thought were given to this matter, dozens more could be found. We ask those who equate tawassul with idol worshipping to have some justice, for how could the two ever be the same when there is no similarity whatsoever between them?

Final Words

To prove our stance of tawassul being permissible, we have shared **verses, ahadith, sahaba narrations, sayings of scholars**, and we have also provided answers to some of the issues that those with opposing views have voiced. We can only hope that they see the errors they have made, and divert from continuing to make them in the future. However, we also know that anything we do can only ever be a means through which to show the truth, and that only Allah (swt) can unveil it to whomever he wills. Perhaps the people who read this may find some flaw in us and refuse to address the points we put forth because of this, but we hope that they will be able to look beyond them, choosing instead to look at our words and their meanings. The only thing that can be aimed for is the approval of Allah (swt).

اللهم أرنا الحق حقا وارزقنا اتباعه وأرنا الباطل باطلا وارزقنا اجتنابه واجعلنا من الذين يستمعون القول فيتبعون أحسنه